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Field visits

Report on the joint field visit to Mozambique*

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* For the UNDP and UNFPA segments of the field visit, see DP/2003/CRP.10/Add.1 – DP/FPA/2003/CRP.1/Add.1; for the UNICEF segment, see E/ICEF/2003/CRP.9; for the WFP segment, see WFP/EB.2/2003/INF/8.

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I. Introduction

1. Members of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) made a joint field visit to Mozambique from 10 to20 March 2003, following discussion at the first regular session of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA in January 2003 and consultations amongst the respective Board members. The strategic vision and terms of reference for the visit were set out in document DP/2003/CRP.5.

2. The visit comprised: a two-day joint session in Maputo; two parallel two-day field visits of mixed groups; four- to five-day separate programmes with the respective host agencies; and a final day of joint wrap-up and review meetings. This report was prepared jointly by rapporteurs from the respective Executive Boards in consultation with the team leaders, Executive Board secretariats and the United Nations country management team (UNCMT).

3. The Board members would like to express their thanks to all those involved in the visit – in particular the United Nations country teams, who made a huge collective effort to support the visit – as well as to the Government of Mozambique, bilateral and multilateral donors, non-governmental organizations and all who participated.

II. Background

Recent history and background

4. The independence of Mozambique, in 1975, was followed almost immediately by a 16-year civil war that caused more than 1.7 million Mozambicans to seek refuge in neighbouring countries and four million others to be displaced internally, bringing the local economy to a virtual standstill. By the time the Government and Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) signed the General Peace Agreement (GPA) in October 1992, more than half of the social infrastructure had been destroyed or forced to close, while 60 per cent of national territory could be reached only by military protected convoy or by air. Under the GPA, the United Nations assumed responsibility for supervising and monitoring the military, political, humanitarian and electoral components of the accord. In December 1992, the Security Council approved a full-scale peacekeeping operation; and the United Nations played a leading role in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the combatants. United Nations-assisted multiparty elections took place in 1994 and 1999, and were won each time by the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), the ruling party since independence. Municipal elections are scheduled to take place in 2003 and national elections in 2004.

Development performance of Mozambique

5. Despite relative stability and economic progress since 1992, with real GDP growth around 6-8 per cent, Mozambique remains one of the poorest countries in the world. It ranked 170th out of 173 countries in the human development index contained in the UNDP-published *Human Development Report 2000*. Of the 18.2 million inhabitants, around 70 per cent live below the poverty line estimated at $0.40 per day. Other indicators include life expectancy (43.5 years, according to 1999 data); the under-5 mortality rate (246/1000 in 1997); and the maternal mortality rate (1500/100 000 in 1998). There are wide disparities by region (rural poverty, 71 per cent; urban poverty 62 per cent) and by gender (male literacy, 60 per cent; female literacy, 29 per cent). HIV/AIDS prevalence is estimated at 13 per cent, but with great disparities between regions, rising to 20 per cent in some areas. The frequency of natural disasters (including

droughts, floods and cyclones); the historically weak infrastructure linking the northern, central and southern regions; and the legacy of war (depleted human resources due to death and low education during years of war; a large number of orphans and a dangerous residue of landmines) all present specific development challenges.

Development policy in Mozambique

6. The Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty (PARPA) is the cornerstone of the development plan of Mozambique. It is a nationally owned version of the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP), prepared by the Government of Mozambique in dialogue with the World Bank and based on consultation with civil society and a range of multilateral and bilateral development partners, including the United Nations country team. The central objective of the PARPA is a substantial reduction in the levels of poverty in Mozambique. The headline target is to reduce the incidence of absolute poverty from 70 per cent in 1997 to less than 60 per cent in 2005 and less than 50 per cent by 2010. It depends critically on the maintenance of peace and socio-political stability and aims at maintaining the real growth rates of eight per cent achieved in recent years. The 2001-2005 PARPA builds on the 2000-2004 version with a strategic vision based on measures to fight poverty through sustained, broad-based economic growth. It identifies six priority areas of action: education; health; agriculture and rural development; basic infrastructure; good governance; and macroeconomic and financial management.

7. The participants in the joint field visit were briefed on the country's development priorities by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and by other officials including from the Ministry of Planning and Finance. The minister highlighted two broad priorities: (i) preserving peace and democracy through good governance – including attention to the National Assembly, the police and the judiciary – and ii) tackling poverty, disease and the impact of natural disasters. He also stressed that food security should be strengthened as far as possible through development of the agricultural industry rather than relying on food aid, which is necessary in emergency situations. He and other government representatives placed great importance on the country's ownership of its own development strategy, while welcoming multilateral and bilateral support.

III. United Nations reform, strategy and policy coordination

8. The United Nation Country Management Team (UNCMT) in Mozambique was constituted in 1997, in line with the Secretary General's reform, using the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) as its central organizing framework. The 2002-2006 UNDAF is the second produced by the UNCMT, whose members have harmonized the schedules of their individual programme cycles. The UNDAF is the UNCMT response to the Common Country Assessment (CCA), which was in turn prepared in consultation with Government and other development partners to reflect the areas of comparative advantage for a United Nations contribution to the PARPA.

9. The UNDAF is organized under four broad objectives, each having subgroups through which the UNCMT organizes its work. The structure is as follows:

1. The right to personal security
1.1 HIV/AIDS (prevention, care and research)
1.2 Disaster management: natural disasters; mine action

2. The right to knowledge and a long and healthy life
2.1 Education (gender equality of access; quality of delivery)
2.2 Health and well-being (quality of services; nutrition; water and sanitation)

3. The right to sustainable livelihoods
3.1 Rural development and agriculture
3.2 Employment and private sector development

4. The right to full participation, protection, and equality
4.1 Democracy and decentralization (including elections, role of the police, etc.)

10. Under the chairmanship of United Nations agency heads on a rotational basis, the UNCMT meets twice monthly to coordinate programmatic and operational activities through the inter-agency thematic groups (on HIV/AIDS or gender, for example). They worked with the Government of Mozambique to produce the first national report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and are now working on integrating MDG monitoring and evaluation into the PARPA in a way that meets the government's national development priorities. Through their respective country programmes, the agencies pursue the mandates and priorities of their respective Executive Boards, in line with Mozambican priorities and in collaboration with each other and with other donors and civil society actors.

IV. Donor coordination

11. Donor coordination in Mozambique operates at a variety of levels. The overarching coordination body is the Mozambique Development Partners Group chaired by UNDP and the World Bank. Thematic sub-groups for coordination have been formed. Some of these are chaired by UN agencies – UNDP chairs the sub-group on police, for example, and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) the one on agriculture. Some are chaired by bilaterals (the Netherlands, for instance, runs the sub-group on water); and others by the Government of Mozambique. There are five Inter-Agency Groups on Sector-wide Approaches (SWAPs) in the country, with active United Nations participation in a number of these. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNFPA and the World Health Organization (WHO) are involved in the SWAP on health, UNICEF, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNFPA and WFP in the one on education, FAO and UNDP in the one on agriculture, and UNICEF in the one on water. One of the most influential groups is the G11 – an informal group of major donors providing budgetary support – to which the World Bank and UNDP have been admitted as observers. South-South cooperation also plays an important part, with the NEPAD framework, the Lusophone community including countries such as Brazil, and the Commonwealth neighbours of Mozambique.

12. The participants had a lively exchange with bilateral donors based in Maputo. Most commended the work of the UNCMT, and many were involved in co-financing arrangements. Some donors felt that in the past the Development Partners Group had been little more than an information exchange. They welcomed the willingness of UNDP to use it as a tool for coordinating contributions to the PARPA and a forum for dialogue between development partners and the government of Mozambique. Some partners also felt that the United Nations should be more strategic in its interventions, placing greater emphasis on "upstream" donor coordination, policy advice and capacity building rather than "downstream", grass-roots programmes and projects. United Nations representatives countered that a combination of both approaches was necessary, since "downstream" work informs policy advice and capacity-building activity and makes the Organization a credible development partner for national and regional governance. The Vice-Minister

of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (who received the participants on the final day of their visit) strongly supported this, confirming that United Nations participation was needed at both levels.

13. The participants also heard from a variety of local and international civil society organizations based in Maputo. Their work ranged from strategic engagement and lobbying in connection with the PARPA to grass roots interventions. Some, working in the area of HIV/AIDS with the UNCMT, had helped the National HIV/AIDS Council prepare its submission to the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; others were involved in HIV/AIDS education or caring for those affected. Non-government organizations (NGOs) urged the United Nations system to remain engaged in the field, and at the grass-roots level, including working with local NGOs, rather than work only with Maputo-based partners. In discussion with both bilateral donors and NGOs there was broad agreement that with such a large number of development partners operating at national and regional levels, coherence and complementarity were essential in striving towards the goals of the PARPA.

V. Cross-cutting thematic issues

14. The participants discussed a range of development policy priorities for Mozambique with the UNCMT, the Government of Mozambique, donors and other stakeholders. Discussions on cross-cutting themes highlighted three issues in particular: HIV/AIDS, humanitarian assistance and disaster mitigation, and gender. Other UNDAF priorities, such as poverty eradication, girls' education, mine action and governance, were covered in greater detail during the individual visits and are therefore covered in the addenda to the present joint report.

HIV/AIDS

15. HIV/AIDS constitutes one of the greatest threats to the development of Mozambique. The epidemic has devastating effects on health and education services, reduces productivity and human capital and poses a continuing threat to the growth of the afflicted country's gross domestic product (GDP). Currently 1.2 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in Mozambique, around 60 per cent of whom are women. 230 000 children have lost their mothers due to the epidemic. The Government of Mozambique has taken important steps towards incorporating a national programme on HIV/AIDS into its development policy framework. A national strategic plan to combat HIV/AIDS has been formulated to serve as a basis for ministries to plan and implement prevention and mitigation activities. Further attention needs to be paid treatment and care initiatives.

16. The United Nations system supports Government action in combating the disease and is structuring its activities within the context of an integrated response. All the United Nations agencies are involved in supporting the Government objectives outlined in the National Strategic Plan against HIV/AIDS and in the PARPA. This approach is based on the objectives of the 2002-2006 UNDAF (II) in which the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS represents a central cross-cutting theme. The agencies have committed to spend a minimum of 25 per cent of their resources for the fight against HIV/AIDS. The United Nations system in Mozambique is committed, through the UNDAF, to supporting the implementation of a national multi-sectoral strategy for prevention and care. It also supports the formulation of a strategy to address the combined effects of HIV/AIDS, food insecurity and inadequate governance.

Humanitarian response, including mitigating the effect of natural disasters and food insecurity

17. Mozambique is prone to natural disasters such as floods and prolonged droughts, which often occur in different parts of the country at the same time. In 2000 and 2001, large areas of southern and central

Mozambique were severely affected by floods, resulting in the displacement of 500 000 and 200 000 people respectively. The infrastructure suffered significant damage and the loss of personal possessions, crops and livestock was considerable, as were the associated impacts on health, nutrition and education for those affected. In 2002 and 2003, below-average rainfall in the southern and central provinces has had a devastating impact on subsistence agricultural production and the availability of water. These provinces, usually the worst affected by natural disasters, also suffer the highest levels of HIV/AIDS. The combined effects of HIV/AIDS, economic recession and repeated natural disasters have eroded people's capacity to cope, increasing the vulnerability of an already impoverished population. A multiple and integrated approach, taking into account the combined effects of HIV/AIDS, poverty, food insecurity, disaster mitigation and weak governance, is clearly required to address the humanitarian situation

18. The recent vulnerability assessment identified 650 000 people in need of food aid, with unacceptably high levels of acute malnutrition and stunting among children. The assessment also found extremely high incidence rates of diarrhœa and fever in children under five (31 per cent and 45 per cent respectively), and that many infants (25 per cent of children aged 6-23 months) are being fed once a day or less. In addition, people were found to be walking further to collect less water, further reducing their capacity to care for their children's health. The current drought is severe in historical terms. The cumulative rainfall in Maputo from October 2002 - January 2003 was the lowest recorded in more than 50 years. The next significant harvest in the most affected areas will be in February 2004.

19. The Government of Mozambique has joined the Regional Response Strategy to the Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa but has not launched a separate international appeal. The Government is responding to the situation through the implementation of its national disaster-preparedness and response plan, coordinated by the National Institute for Disaster Management, which receives capacity-building support from UNDP. Sectoral plans, such as the Action Plan of the Ministry of Agriculture, also play a special role in facilitating the transportation of humanitarian assistance to the landlocked, food-insecure countries in the region. The United Nations system supports the Government Contingency Plan and coordinates United Nations monitoring and response through its Disaster Management Team.

20. United Nations agencies are supporting the response of the Government of Mozambique to the crisis through their regular programmes and additional targeted operations. As of March 2003, WFP has distributed 25 956 tonnes of emergency food aid to 340 000 people. Funding shortfalls, however, meant that the distribution met only about 50 per cent of the requirement. A supplementary food programme has been implemented jointly by WFP and UNICEF to feed children under the age of five and expectant and nursing mothers and to build community capacities, through participatory education, in nutrition and hygiene practices. The programme aims to support 141 000 children and 71 000 women in 22 districts where malnutrition rates are the highest. As of 31 March 2003, the programme was reaching only about 50 per cent of that number due to lack of funding for the food component.

21. United Nations agencies are supporting numerous other programmes for emergency rehabilitation, agriculture, health, water and sanitation, education, HIV/AIDS and special protection, capacity building and disaster prevention and management. UNICEF is providing support to build national capacities to monitor the situation of orphans and other vulnerable children, the nutritional status of children under the age of five, and attendance rates at primary schools in the affected areas. Both UNICEF and WHO have been working with the Ministry of Health to prevent and control epidemics through increased epidemiological surveillance, measles immunization and building community capacities to prevent diarrhœal diseases and malaria. Under WFP's country programme, the Food for Development Fund supports community disaster-mitigation activities such as multiplying seeds, opening communal fields and constructing small irrigation systems and water-containment areas. The WFP Community Safety Net programme supports 12 000 orphans, vulnerable children and people living with HIV/AIDS, and an

extensive school feeding operation that provides nutritious meals to day-pupils and boarders. About 1 150 tonnes of various commodities are distributed under these programmes each month, reaching 160 000 children. Additional activities to prevent a decline in school enrolment and attendance are being supported by UNICEF, including the distribution of pupil and teacher kits and the installation of improved water and sanitation facilities in primary schools in the affected areas. As part of a regional joint initiative, WFP, UNICEF and Save the Children (UK) are working to implement a "zero-tolerance of sexual exploitation" education campaign for people involved in the humanitarian response, including Government, United Nations and NGO workers.

Gender

22. Gender inequity remains a major challenge. Despite some progress for Mozambican women in the political arena (they hold 30 per cent of parliamentarian and 13 per cent ministerial positions), and the narrowing of the gender gap in the earlier years of primary education in selected provinces, significant gender disparities remain on basic development indicators. The illiteracy rate is much higher among women (71 per cent) than men (40 per cent); the maternal mortality rate is one of the highest in the world (estimated at 1 500 per 100 000 live births); a considerable gender gap exists in education, where girls are heavily under-represented, especially in secondary school. Women and adolescent girls are severely affected by HIV/AIDS, often as a result of sexual abuse. Although reliable data on gender-based violence is limited, it is widely acknowledged to constitute a major threat to gender equity.

23. Mozambique has made considerable progress with respect to its institutional framework for promoting gender equity. In 1999 the Ministry of Coordination of Social Actions was upgraded to Ministry of Women and Coordination of Social Actions. In 2002 the National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women was adopted for better integrating gender issues into the PARPA. Gender units were created within the principal ministries. In the civil society arena, networks of local and national women's NGOs are now in place. Nevertheless, JVF members noted the absence of an adequate legal environment for ensuring gender equity. The proposed Family Law, considered very important to that end, has yet to be passed by Parliament.

24. United Nations agencies are supporting national efforts to address gender issues, particularly through capacity building in the principal ministries and in a number of national NGOs, and the implementation of a broad range of projects aimed at curbing gender-based violence and violence against children. The United Nations agencies are also paying attention to the issue of girls' education as an important means to ensure gender equity.

25. The delegation noted the efforts of various United Nations agencies in Mozambique to better coordinate their gender-related work. The overall coordinating role in this area belongs to the United Nations Technical Working Group on Gender (GTWG), chaired by UNFPA and including UNDP, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the secretariat of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), FAO, WHO, UNESCO and WFP, which provides a forum for joint planning, programming and monitoring in the selected common areas.

Other themes

26. Other cross cutting issues covered in the UNDAF, such as governance, poverty eradication and mine action were discussed briefly in the Joint Segment and addressed in more detail in the individual segments (see annexes).

VI. Joint field visits

27. Mixed groups representing all of the Boards made parallel two-day visits to Chokwe and Xai-Xai, both in Gaza province, to look at activities reflecting collaborative and complementary work on the part of the United Nations teams.

28. The group visiting Chokwe saw examples of the School Feeding and Food for Work programmes run by WFP as part of its emergency operation in areas struck by severe flooding and drought. They saw UNFPA working to promote HIV/AIDS awareness in adolescents and youth through schools, and its Safe Motherhood programme support for a rural hospital. They saw UNICEF support for a school and child rehabilitation centre where issues of dealing with HIV/AIDS and gender were introduced to the children. They visited a UNDP artisan fishery project – a rural poverty programme that imparts the skills needed for sustainable fishing. This pilot demonstrated the important features of sustainability and replicability as opposed to limited local value. The group spoke to the district authorities, community leaders, and local NGOs who were partners in these programmes.

29. The group that visited Xai-Xai saw the collaborative efforts of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP in creating a set of complementary activities. They included improving access to counselling and testing for HIV/AIDS; improving the nutritional status of children in institutions; HIV advocacy and prevention activities for and by young people; care and support to orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS; and strengthening communities' capacity to cope with its impact. They also included partnerships with communities and NGOs in the water and sanitation sector and with the private sector to make available insecticide-treated nets for the prevention of malaria.

Observations based on joint field visits

30. The projects visited during the joint visit to Gaza demonstrated the active role being played by each United Nations agency within its respective mandate to contribute to the development process in Mozambique through support the poverty reduction activities of the Government as outlined in the PARPA, to humanitarian assistance and disaster mitigation, and to the fight against HIV/AIDS. While interventions were undertaken with the aim of maximizing the comparative advantage of each individual agency, Board members had the opportunity to examine the extent to which the agencies involved worked synergistically to achieve the greatest impact in providing support to local communities. In Xai-Xai city, the delegation saw the complementarity of United Nations agencies in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention and care. While UNICEF is supporting a day-hospital that attends to the needs of HIV-infected people and overseeing the programme on prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT), UNFPA is facilitating access to SRH services for adolescents, and UNDP had supported the establishment of a voluntary counselling and testing centre. All of these interconnected services are monitored by the Provincial Directorate of Health.

VII. Concluding impressions and recommendations

31. It is impossible in this short report to do justice to the depth of experience and the volumes of information accumulated over the 10 days of the visit. Equally, the members of the Boards represented are aware that in a country as vast and complex as Mozambique it would be rash to make stark generalizations, draw firm conclusions or put forward radical recommendations. That is not the intention of this report. What follows is a collection of broad impressions grouped into five main areas: the Mozambique experience and lessons learned from it; the particular challenges posed by HIV/AIDS and by recurrent natural disasters; the collaborative work of the UN and other donors; and the value of joint field visits. The sub-headings below draw on the strategic vision and terms of reference outlined in UNDP/UNFPA document DP/2003/CRP.5.

How is the United Nations facilitating the transition from conflict to reconstruction and recovery based on the national development strategy? What is unique to Mozambique that has led to such a period of sustained peace? What are government and people doing to prevent a recurrence of the past crisis?

32. Ten years after the peace agreement that ended the 15-year civil war in Mozambique, the country is beyond the post-conflict phase and is in the transition to sustainable economic growth and human development. The United Nations played a central role in the immediate post-war phase, particularly with respect to elections and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the parties to the conflict. Other donors were present from the beginning to help the initial effort at local and national levels. Although elections have been contested, all parties have eventually accepted the results. There has been strong national support across party lines for maintaining peace and pursuing national development objectives, as expressed in the unifying role of the PARPA and the Agenda 2025 project for Mozambique. The PARPA is both congruous and coherent. The absence of ethnic rivalry in the post-war political debate and a fairly even-handed treatment of different groups by the Government and its donor partners have encouraged the cohesive national impulse towards peace and development.

33. But Mozambique and the development community that supports it cannot afford to be complacent. It remains one of the poorest countries in the world, and over 50 per cent of its public expenditure comes from external assistance. The legacy of war and migration has left particular challenges: a weak infrastructure and depleted human resources, high illiteracy, particularly in provinces far from the capital; and the impact of mines spread across country. This legacy weakens institutional capacity to implement poverty reduction strategies. Despite steady growth over the past decade, the occurrence of natural disasters can cause setbacks, as the events of 2000-2001 demonstrated. If unchecked, the exponential growth of HIV/AIDS prevalence threatens to reverse development and slow down achievement of national MDG-related priorities. Strengthened government capacity at the field level and further development of human resources are needed to guarantee a transition to sustainable and equitable growth. The principles of good governance and strong, transparent institutions have not yet taken root, and the government will face serious challenge at the next election. Mozambique has made real progress, but it is not irreversible.

What is the impact of periodic crises caused by droughts and floods on recovery and reconstruction?

34. Periodic crises caused by droughts, floods and cyclones will remain a fact of life in Mozambique. In particularly severe moments, as in 2000, they will cause intense suffering and significant setbacks at the local level and will slow the trend of sustained growth of the gross national product and the attainment of the MDGs. Part of the response lies in disaster prevention and preparedness. As outlined above, the UN system has supported the efforts of the Government of Mozambique to strengthen national contingency planning and disaster prevention and management capacity, particularly since the devastating floods of 2000. The United Nations country team is making disaster mitigation, and the reduction of vulnerability to natural disasters, a central part of its strategy. It is strengthening coordination for a multi-sectoral approach to vulnerability reduction and ensuring cooperation between humanitarian and development agencies of the United Nations system.

35. Investment in durable assets is essential to reducing levels of vulnerability. The gradual assumption of responsibility for crisis management by local authorities is necessary and is being supported by the UNCMT. The members of the respective Executive Boards welcome this and encourage further efforts by United Nations agencies to systematically link the provision of support through humanitarian assistance, food distribution and health-care services to programmes designed to ensure the empowerment of local communities and the establishment of sustainable alternative sources of income.

36. The participants in the field visit noted that international and national NGOs currently distribute of relief assistance and implement disaster-mitigation programmes, while involvement on the part of the local administration remains secondary. Lack of implementation capacity, particularly in remote areas, poses a major challenge, and the monitoring of distribution and implementation is severely constrained by the vastness of the country and the in adequacy of the infrastructure. The sense of dependence is heightened by the large proportion of humanitarian assistance provided for by external assistance.

What is the impact of HIV/AIDS on government development priorities and the United Nations programme of implementation?

37. The threat of HIV/AIDS is more predictable than that of natural disasters. Unchecked, it would grow exponentially and undermine all other development efforts. The Ministry of Planning and Finance suggested that based on some predictions of trends in HIV/AIDS infection, economic growth rates might have to be revised downwards by some 4 percentage points per year – which would seriously challenge the 8 per cent real growth assumptions of the PARPA. Yet while infection rates of 13 per cent nationally and up to 20 per cent in some regions are disturbing, Mozambique is less severely affected than many of its neighbours, some of whom have infections rates above 20 or even 30 per cent. This is mainly due to the fact that Mozambique was isolated during the war, but it also shows that policy interventions and decisions can make a significant difference to the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in even the poorest countries.

38. As illustrated above, the Government of Mozambique has adopted a range of policies to address HIV/AIDS. The United Nations country team is to be highly commended for its work in mainstreaming an HIV/AIDS component into almost every area of its activity. It is understood that there is a relationship between food insecurity and HIV/AIDS, and the United Nations agencies are working together to address this. Similarly, the growth in the number of orphans due to HIV/AIDS is factored into United Nations system interventions. Nevertheless, the participants in the field visit feared that the epidemic would increase in Mozambique unless greater national efforts were expended to address the factors fuelling the epidemic. These include lack of knowledge about how to prevent infection; gender inequality, including traditional values that give women little opportunity to participate in decisions related to their sexuality and reproductive health; poverty; unemployment; illiteracy and food insecurity. The Mozambican authorities distributed charts indicating that after a steep rise the increase in HIV/AIDS infection would flatten out and stabilize at around 20 per cent. But the participants in the field visit found the rationale for this rather optimistic. Although that estimate is based on results of programmes formulated by international development partners, infection rates have gone much higher in neighbouring countries. The same could happen in Mozambique without appropriate policies.

39. Joint Field Visit members also felt that special attention should be given at the national level to participatory planning, improved information gathering and the continual updating of national strategic planning. They welcomed the special emphasis placed on the 9-15 age group, which shows lower rates of infection, constituting a window of opportunity for halting the progressive expansion of the epidemic.

How are multilateral agencies working together to achieve these goals, including through donor coordination and harmonization?

40. There is consensus among development partners and civil society that the central organizing basis for development activity in Mozambique is the PARPA – the Government's national development plan. The United Nations contribution to the PARPA is organized through UNDAF II, which the participants in the field visit commend for the degree of central coordination that it represents. At the national level, donor coordination is working, particularly on sectoral or thematic issues. UNDP is working with the World Bank and others to give the Development Partners Group a more strategic focus: The participants strongly

encourage this. Joint field visit participants also considered that one of the main challenges for all development partners in Mozambique is translating cooperation at the national level to effective coordination on the ground. There appears to be a significant gap between the Government's coherent, well-structured central mechanisms for drawing up development policy and the limits of capacity and human resources to deliver outcomes at the regional and local levels. Helping the government to close this gap remains a key challenge for all development partners in Mozambique.

41. Joint field visit participants recognized that there was some tension between, on the one hand, the demand expressed in the United Nations reform agenda, and reflected in the comments of some bilateral donors, to provide upstream policy advice and strategic interventions, focusing on the priorities of the PARPA and nationally tailored Millennium Development Goals; and, on the other hand, the call to engage in traditional grass-roots projects as encouraged by many in the NGOs community and welcomed by district authorities. By limiting itself to upstream activity, the United Nations would leave much of its development effort at the mercy of weak institutional capacity and depleted human resources, which would obstruct the ability to turn coherent, well intentioned national policies into development results on the ground. Yet if the United Nations were to confine itself to downstream activity, the objectives of sustainability and coherence with the national strategy would be diluted. Support at the grass-roots level needs to be focussed on transferring knowledge and skills to communities so as to strengthen their capacity to become actors in their own development, which is key to a sustainable approach to development. The United Nations is neither a large financial donor nor an independent NGO. By seeking to prioritize its interventions in areas where it can genuinely add value to the PARPA –such as governance, policy advice, advocacy, capacity building, technical assistance, coordination – the United Nations can play a powerful role within the complex schema of donor activity.

42. The increasingly coherent way in which we wish the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) to act should, of course, be reflected in collaborative or joint programming in the countries concerned. Further joint programming and field-level cooperation is both planned by the UNCMT and encouraged by the Boards of the respective agencies. The participants in the field visit felt, however, that collaborative and joint programming places considerable additional demands on country offices. Both types of programming are time-consuming and appear to add an additional layer of administration on top of existing ones. While the United Nations-agencies in Maputo are confident that they can continue to improve coordination mechanisms for collaborative projects, they see a need for head offices to improve and simplify procedures for joint programming. The participants in the field visit recommend that an analysis of the situation be undertaken and that recommendations be made by the secretariat on ways of improving and simplifying the agencies' procedures for collaborative and joint programming. In future, when deciding on the mode of cooperation the agencies involved should be able to base their decision solely on the objective to be achieved rather than on the administrative burden to be shouldered by each cooperative mechanism.

43. The participants stressed the importance of ensuring ongoing, effective assessment of the impact of joint activities, particularly those involving complementary components. This should help provide the tools for accurate analysis of the value added by these initiatives and for identifying mechanisms and strategies for improving joint action. It was also felt that United Nations agencies should increase their efforts to support the capacity of civil society and other partners to implement programmes where such partners possess a comparative advantage in providing services. Support for local (provincial and district) capacity to coordinate and monitor programmes was also encouraged.

44. The participants noted that the impact of the United Nations system in supporting Government development objectives is greatly enhanced where Mozambican ownership is strong. At the national level, government ownership and coordination are essential to ensure the complementarity of activities and the sustainability of programmes. This also applies at the local and community level. Local community action

plays a leading role not only in implementation but also in the formulation of programmes and the development of key initiatives which have the potential to yield significant gains –in the fight against HIV/AIDS and in promoting food production, for example.

45. As highlighted above, gender issues are critical to meeting the national development objectives of Mozambique. Some participants supported the view of the Gender Working Group chairperson that capacity building within the United Nations system was needed. This could be achieved by strengthening the role of gender focal points within the agencies; improving the skills of United Nations programme officers in gender planning, monitoring and budgeting; recruiting a gender adviser at the Resident Coordinator's Office; and establishing a permanent secretariat for the Gender Working Group.

46. The participants noted the positive impact of close cooperation between the United Nations system, civil society and NGOs in achieving critical objectives at the local level. It was therefore felt that ongoing efforts to strengthen partnerships with the NGO sector would be vital in maximizing the impact of the United Nations system in key areas such as health-care and sanitation, where NGOs often act as important implementation partners. While international NGOs have traditionally played an active role, local NGOs, which have the potential to become important actors in view of their knowledge of local circumstances, are still playing a less visible role due to shortages of human resources and funding. It was therefore stressed that there was a need to support sustainability through support of local NGOs. It was also felt in order to ensure efficiency, complementarity and maximum impact, a coordination system among NGOs and with the United Nations system would be essential.

Lessons for future joint field visits

47. There was a strongly held view among the Boards represented that the Mozambique experience demonstrated there was great value in undertaking joint visits to the field. The cross-cutting agenda on issues such as HIV/AIDS, and the complementarity of the work of different parts of the UNCMT on issues such as the link between humanitarian relief and sustainable development, meant that Boards could not and should not look at the work of each agency in isolation. Through the introduction of the Resident Coordinator system, the application of the UNDAF and the use of thematic teams to address specific challenges, we felt that in Mozambique the United Nations presence was moving towards a unified, well-coordinated system and towards a single identity – perhaps even more so than the visitors representing the different Boards. (This process would be considerably enhanced if, with the help of the government of Mozambique, a location for the single UN House could be found.) One clear benefit of the joint visit was that the Board representatives discovered more about each other's agendas and the interrelationships between them. Most participants felt that future joint visits might benefit from even more time devoted to joint activity rather than individual segments. Individual segments might include mixed Board participation. With the new generation of UNDAFs it should be possible for joint visits to pay even greater attention to evaluating the contribution of the UNDAF to national poverty strategies and MDG monitoring – and in particular the collaborative relationship between the United Nations system and World Bank family. Future joint visits should also look more closely at the role of specialized agencies such as WHO and FAO.

48. Perhaps the greatest challenge for the joint visit was the organizational and logistical burden it placed on the country team and especially on the Resident Coordinator's office. The Mozambique UNCMT made a tremendous effort in this regard, both in the preparation of materials and logistical arrangements before the visit and in the excellent support they provided throughout the programme. They, in turn, found the joint visit productive and particularly appreciated the opportunity to hear a range of views and perspectives from members of different Boards. But they acknowledged that constructing the programme and providing support had been a major challenge during a busy period. At times the Mozambique group, including

representatives of the Boards' secretariats and host government representatives, numbered 27 visitors. For future joint visits, the respective Executive Boards should endeavour to limit the size of the delegation, perhaps to an absolute ceiling of around 20 participants. The Boards should also consider carefully its choice of destination to take account of the capacity of the local United Nations offices to organize such a visit. The next host country would do well to learn from the example provided by the joint field visit to Mozambique.

49. Despite the logistical challenges, the participants in the visit to Mozambique would recommend that the Executive Boards of the respective agencies organize one joint field visit per year. Preparations, which should be made well in advance, would be enhanced by the establishment of a single focal point at headquarters (perhaps this role could be rotational among the Board secretariats) as a liaison between the Boards and the Resident Coordinator's office. The participants in this joint field visit would also recommend that on future field visits by individual Executive Boards, participants take the time to look at the work of other United Nations organizations, thus strengthening the oversight of the collaborative relationship among United Nations agencies on the ground.